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Editorial

SOME years ago we called attention to a book about Christian reunion by Professor Karl Adam,[1] concerning which we said that he showed a warm and patently sincere sympathy with Protestants and that his appreciation of the personality and witness of Luther was much more positive and profound than that of many Protestants themselves. The same and more can be said of *Du Protestantisme à l'Église*,[2] by Père Louis Bouyer, which is a very remarkable essay on the whole Reformation movement. Père Bouyer has the advantage that he was himself a Protestant pastor before he entered the Roman Catholic Church, and he would claim not to have denied his earlier faith but to have brought it with him to where it belongs.

His thesis is that the positive affirmations of the Reformers were entirely justified, indeed that they constituted a rediscovery of fundamental and central articles of the Catholic faith which had been lost sight of in the late medieval Church and which are not always recognized as such even now. The obvious and profound spirituality of Protestantism, of which he gives a penetrating and moving account, is derived from its positive affirmations—*sola gratia, sola fide, Soli Deo gloria*; they go right to the heart of the Gospel. The tragedy was that the Reformers and their successors in the stress of controversy came to combine their positive principles with barren and anti-catholic negations with which they had no necessary connexion. These negations carried what was really a wonderful revival of orthodoxy into heresy and schism. The principal cause of the tragedy was, according to Père Bouyer, the fact that both the Reformers and their Catholic opponents were still prisoners of the nominalism which was so important a feature of late medieval doctrine and which was bound to distort whatever was confined within its categories.

Thus, justification *sola gratia sola fide*, which in Luther's own experience and spontaneous teaching was liberating and transforming in its effects, was systematized into a forensic theory according to which justification is merely imputed, leaving sinners just where they are. Or again, Calvin's deepest apprehension was of the transcendent *mystery* of the Divine Being—Père Bouyer goes so far as to say that hardly any form of historic Christianity is at bottom more thoroughly mystical than Calvinism, rightly understood; but its nominalism prevailed over its mysticism and so turned it into its opposite. Likewise, the sovereign authority of Holy Scripture, which

[1] See THEOLOGY, May 1950, p. 161. An English translation of this book has recently been published under the title *One and Holy*, Sheed and Ward, 7s. 6d.

[2] Éditions du Cerf, Paris. 660 frs.

is an essential article of the Catholic faith and ensures that human systems of thought will not be allowed to usurp the place of the Word of God, was debased into a narrow and wooden biblicism and treated as the negative of the authority of tradition and the Church.

Père Bouyer's method, as he himself acknowledges, bears a close resemblance to that of F. D. Maurice. That is to say, he seeks to disengage from each Protestant system the positive principle which it originally enshrined and from which it derived its strength and its appeal, and then to show that these principles are reconciled and safeguarded from distortion only within the structure of historic Catholicism. He is aware that many Roman Catholics will be surprised by his reiterated assertion that the positive affirmations of Protestantism are capital and permanent elements in their own faith, but he quotes chapter and verse to prove his point. Anglicans will share some of this surprise. As a matter of fact, we have more confidence in Père Bouyer as an interpreter of Protestantism than of Roman Catholicism! At least, we should say that the latter is itself more of a *complexio oppositorum* than he allows. But in any case we are grateful to him for a book which is intended to challenge everyone's prejudices; we much hope that it will be translated into English.

Putting Episcopacy in its Place

Few things are more soul-destroying than books, or even articles like this one, on the subject of episcopacy. Apostolic succession and the historic continuity and canonical validity of our orders ought not to be something we argue about or seek to justify. We ought to be able to take it for granted, like the legitimacy of our own genealogy. Those who are too anxious about such things may be procrastinating over still more important decisions. Those who are so busy arguing about their authority may be failing to use it for the purpose for which it was bestowed, which is to offer Christ and salvation to the people

No man can read books about episcopacy or ministerial order for spiritual reading, any more than he could live on anchovy sauce. Like humour, episcopacy is a spice or seasoning, not to be taken alone. Humour should season all life and literature. But it should not be isolated. "Humorous" books and periodicals are frequently deadly dull. If not dull, they are worse; they are excessively stimulating, and thus make the rest of life duller. It is much better when we meet with some wit and humour in books on theology, or economics, or even botany. I cannot help thinking that the English take both humour and cricket too seriously! I am inclined to put beyond the pale those unnaturally solemn and earnest persons who boast that they possess a sense of humour. The whole point of all jokes is that we must never take them too seriously.

Something the same may be said of bishops. If you put them on a pedestal, someone else will be tempted to turn it into a pillory. They ought not to be isolated. It may be a good thing for them to be

concentrated occasionally, as at Lambeth and other such conclaves. But really it is unnatural and improper for a lot of bishops to be together for any long period. For the greater part of the time they ought to be in their native haunts, their dioceses. They ought to blend with the Church, controlling her faith and life. Being holy and humble men of heart, they should be sensitive also to criticism by the saints. Only think of that superb moment when an archbishop knelt down in his cope and mitre and confessed his sins before a whole synod at Bourges, after being rebuked by St Anthony of Padua. How God must have exalted him for so humbling himself. If, with St Paul, a bishop should magnify his office, there are times when he does so best by adopting (with William Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore) the language of St Peter, "The elders which are among you I exhort, which am also an elder" (*sympresbyteros*, 1 Pet. 5. 1).

To isolate episcopacy, to disassociate it from other doctrines, and to consider it, as it were, in a vacuum or hermetically sealed cell, is a most undesirable practice. Thus to isolate doctrines would seem to be a peculiarly Western and medieval habit. It has its uses, when done temporarily for purposes of analysis. When persisted in, so as to become a habit of thought, it is harmful, and leads to all sorts of misrepresentations and misunderstandings. Of this excessive concentration we ourselves present a woeful instance. The nickname "episcopalian" has led many without and even some within to imagine that we hold episcopacy to be more important than Catholic or Biblical Faith. We, among reformed Churches, figure as the protagonists of episcopacy. The results are odd. Some regard episcopacy as a gift to be shared and imparted, perhaps on too easy terms. Others, who claim that they set a higher value upon it, seem to look upon it as a monopoly and to be suspicious of any attempt to extend it. What can one say of the vexed question of South India save that it is a first experiment, at once risky and hopeful? The first patient who undergoes a new operation must always run a risk. Subsequent proposals and schemes for other places show signs of having taken into account the criticisms, and avoided the mistakes which led to them. The Jerusalem bishopric, which caused Newman such anxiety, has been more than justified by its fruits, though it failed to forward the union with the Lutherans at which its originators had aimed. Scottish episcopal orders began in a scheme which had certain resemblances to South India. The Irish Church, along with her "notorious" canons, possesses also the most unassailable episcopal succession in our communion. In England and Wales, fifteen out of sixteen Marian bishops were deprived, whereas in Ireland (small honour to them) the majority of the Marian bishops conformed under Elizabeth I.

But how much does succession matter? Are we to regard it as essential to the constitution of the Church or, to use Littledale's scathing term, as a mere "extra twopence"? To such a question one cannot give a straight answer, though a somewhat qualified "Yes!" is preferable to a much qualified "No!"

The so-called "Invisible", "Mystical", or "True" Church is not

another body from the visible Church. It is the visible Church in so far as it is alive and realizes its purpose. We today avoid such terms as misleading. But we cannot escape making a necessary distinction between the real faith and grace and the mere apparent and outward conformity which can both take place within the visible Church, which is the only Church there is. At bottom the question of episcopacy is a question of genealogy within the visible Church.

Now the Christian is conformed to his Saviour and made the child of God in two ways. They seem mutually exclusive, yet in Scripture and in the life of the Church we find them combined. They are a genealogy, and a virgin-birth. The one belongs to the letter, the other to the spirit. The Christian has, in the first place, a genealogy connecting him with Christ and the Apostles, and knows and has nothing save what he has received by its means. He has been baptized, taught, prayed over (with or without oil or laying on of hands) by others, and those others, too, have but passed on what they received and derived from "that which was from the beginning".

It must be admitted that this genealogy is not necessarily or exclusively episcopal. Even a Quaker may have a part of it. A Free churchman may have a very important part of it. "Faith cometh by hearing", which means that it comes *viva voce*, by the living human voice as part of the tradition of the Church, by which the original deposit is preserved and handed down. Yet all this is of the letter. It is like the building of the altar and the placing of the sacrifice upon it. It is only a preliminary to the essential act by which God sends down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, by which Christ himself makes the human baptism with water a baptism of the Holy Ghost, by which the mere act of hearing becomes the hearing of faith, by which souls are enlightened and fed and bodies sanctified through the Word and Sacraments of the visible Church.

In that mediatorial transmission of the tradition it is very hard to tell what is important or not. For Timothy his mother Lois and his grandmother Eunice played their part. Yet for Timothy it was summed up in the gift he had received through the putting on of the hands of St Paul, and the things he had heard from St Paul, and which he again was to commit to faithful men who should be able to teach others also. The value of episcopacy is that it is the universal sign of that genealogy, the official ministry of that inevitable Apostolic succession by which the Faith is handed down from generation to generation. It is, as it were, "the tradition of the tradition", in a formal, ministerial, "representative" way.

It is found in genealogies that even the "unworthy" are important. The skeletons in the family cupboard are essential links in the chain of the family pedigree. We do not find only heroes and patriarchs like Abraham and David in the genealogy of Christ. We find also the alien Ruth, the doubtful Rehoboam, the disreputable Tamar. All human beings show, by the mere fact of existing, that they have a genealogy, even if they do not know or recognize it. We, however, claim to be able to name our official spiritual ancestors. The bishop is a "Father in God" who has laid hands on the priests,

deacons, and communicants of the Church. In that respect he is basic to the whole doctrine and life of the Church. Yet we cannot assert this so exclusively as to say that he is the sole channel. Rather he is the representative and universal sign of that which happens or may happen more spasmodically and accidentally apart from him. He serves to integrate us with the whole Church by not only one but three living chains which run through all the previous generations. In this respect episcopacy belongs to order and discipline rather than to faith, and is necessary to the proper constitution of a Church rather than to salvation. We may even say that it is of the *bene esse* of the Church—but with the proviso that "things of themselves indifferent do in some sort alter their natures" when they are commanded or forbidden "by a lawful authority", and made a "resolution and practice of our Church". This, or something akin to it, we believe to be the traditional view of the most representative of our divines from the Reformers on through F. D. Maurice, the tradition of the Church as distinct from "High" or "Low" party views.

It ought also to be remembered that, in this matter of episcopacy and diocesan organization, as in other matters, the reformers did not so much return to the Primitive Church as continue that which they had inherited from the middle ages. The "appeal to antiquity" means the spirit, not the letter, of primitive Christianity. It means the restoration of the primitive purity and freedom, the return to the primitive fullness. It does not involve the repudiation of the edifying ceremonies or legitimate developments we owe to the middle ages; witness such things as surplices, kneeling at Communion, the catechetical use of the Decalogue, the *Veni creator* and so on. F. D. Maurice was, I think, pointing to this when he warned us against some of the dangers of "the feeling that there had been a golden age of the Church to which we may look back, and for the restoration of which we may pray". So he refuses to let us forget that the age of St Paul was also the age of Nero. He will not let us exalt Hermas or Ignatius because of their "proximity to the apostles", or prefer them to Athanasius and Ambrose and Augustine. Nay, we must not ignore St Bernard or St Thomas Aquinas, or St Anselm or the schoolmen, or even Dante. We must not exalt particular individuals. We must avoid the error of *making "an age into a Church"*. We are connected with the apostolic age not only directly, by Scripture, but also indirectly, by tradition and succession. We have signs, of which episcopacy is but one, to remind us that the Church is a part of all that it has been, to remind us that it is not only the Church of to-day, or the Church of the Apostles, but also the Church of all the ages between. Scripture, the Faith revealed in its authentic original purity, is the criterion of tradition, the Faith absorbed and applied. But we may not free tradition from Scripture to let it grow into a rank and irresponsible excess, nor may we narrow the Faith down by disowning tradition. Chillingworth said the Bible only was the religion of Protestants. Those who quote him forget that by Protestant he meant the Church of England, and by Bible he meant "Scripture interpreted by Catholic written tradition". The Catholic

System, with its three orders and its liturgy, reminds us, as we look back through time, that the Church is not only the Church of the first age, but of all the ages.

If we regard that system in more special terms, we see it as a free and open hierarchy, which works by including and completing smaller units in a larger whole. Each cell or group is more or less autonomous, and not to be interfered with save at need or by request, or when a breakdown occurs. The Church should encourage what the State is said to hate, an *imperium in imperio*! The parish can get on by itself for a period, but has to call on the bishop at intervals. The diocese, again, is a sort of microcosm of the whole Church, a Church in miniature; yet it also depends on the province for the creation of a new bishop. The hierarchy is terminated by the national or autokephalous Church with its primate; yet it also is associated with other sister Churches, and seeks not "national Christianity", or "Anglicanism", but the Catholic Faith. This system is found, not only among "Anglicans", but also among Old Catholics and Orthodox, and others, like the Lutherans of Sweden. So we do not recommend it as peculiarly "Anglican", but as Catholic and universal.

Whether we call this system a divine creation or an inspired development, whether or not we regard it as necessary to a typical traditional historic embodiment of Christianity, we can say that it has existed for fifteen hundred years, and claim that there is something inevitable and almost natural about its simplicities and its complications. If it is not like a natural growth, it is like a natural construction, such as a bird's nest or a honeycomb.

What are the alternatives? First, there is the Roman system, which has retained the old names, forms, and offices, but has transformed them by a process of addition. It has stiffened what was flexible, and, as far as it could, has closed all that was open. It has, so to speak, poured concrete over the bird's nest, and plaster of Paris over the honeycomb. In the Papacy it has added a fourth order and imposed a semi-totalitarian unity, negating the "home-rule" element of diocese and national Church.

On the other side stand those who reject the givenness of the honeycomb or bird's nest, and insist that the bees or birds shall nest instead in a nice square or rectangular box of their own construction. On this view, the Church is not an inheritance to be received genealogically from the beginning, through past saints and sinners; it is something to be sought now by pious men and constructed out of the blue. It is not a gift to be accepted, but a work to be performed! It is laid down that all ministers are equal, and have a right to ordain. A scheme is constructed out of a few New Testament texts about elders, leaving out what alone matters, the Apostles! Lay elders are somehow introduced into this "holy and equal aristocracy". Milton has no fear "lest any crookedness, any wrinkle or spot should be found in presbyterian government", and dare assure himself that "every true protestant will admire the integrity, the uprightness, the divine and gracious purposes thereof, and even for the reason of it

so coherent with the doctrine of the gospel, beside the evidence of command in Scripture, will confess it to be *the only true church government*". Karl Barth, however, though nurtured under Presbyterianism, has declared his opinion that Congregationalism may be preferable, as more likely to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We find also besides these two the third system, which asserts the priesthood of all believers by abolishing any separate order of ministers (as do the Quakers, Plymouth Brethren, etc.). The first originators and patenters of these systems justified them as the only really scriptural ones. Each laid claim to be the only true Church. Their successors have grown less dogmatic, and have ceased to claim a divine right. But that has not led them back to older ways again. Habit and tradition have come to the aid of faltering convictions, and made them cling closely to their system. Thus the Reformation age has been made into a Church!

We, for our part, must follow our forefathers' example, and refuse to compete in this game of system-building. Rather, we may question the inheritors of these systems, as we might more justly have questioned their inventors. We will examine them about the genuineness of their belief in justification by faith! We are content with the Church as it has been given to us by history and Providence. We have not started a new Church, or tried to justify ourselves. We are ready to let God justify ourselves where we are.

"To be short," says Jewel, "we succeed the bishops that have been before our days. We are elected, consecrate(d), confirmed, and admitted as they were. If they were deceived in any thing, we succeed them in place but not in error. They were our predecessors, but not the rulers and standards of our faith."

Those who reformed our Church in the sixteenth century did not trouble to argue about or to justify episcopacy, they simply continued it, keeping their places and doing their work. In face of the advocates of the "true Church out of the blue", they put up rather a poor show. In face of a logical arbitrary construction maintained with fanatical fervour and self-righteousness, they suffer all the embarrassment of the man who finds himself forced to defend the obvious and universally accepted way of doing things, which he has naturally taken for granted. They are ready to make concessions, and to admit the plea of necessity for the Continental Protestants. They have views on intercommunion rather horrifying to many to-day. At the same time they are rigid and unrepentant in their adherence to the old system, and in their resistance to any attempt to import the new systems into areas under their jurisdiction.

Later on, in the course of the seventeenth century, the "High Church view" gradually formed. As often in times of conflict and controversy, the defender leaves a right and impregnable position, and forms up on ground chosen by his adversaries. The High Anglican imitates the Calvinistic "search for the true Church", and attempt at self-justification by legalizing the Gospel. He does not try to construct a new Church, but he does indulge in the "wasteful and ridiculous excess" of "gilding refined gold" and "painting the lily".

He is not content to leave the God-given bird's nest or honeycomb in its unadorned natural state; he insists on covering it with gold paint! He is not content to accept and continue the Church he has inherited. He must try (in order to compete with Calvinist and Independent) to "prove" it. And he is only too inclined to try to improve on it. Out of that sprang that later Anglo-Catholic "search for tradition" which has changed the time-honoured habits of the Church into a set of new-fangled fashions. At the time when that search began, they borrowed from the contemporary customs of Rome, many of which were neither old nor beautiful. Later the search became more archaeological, as they looked back towards the Sarum Use and the middle ages. Now some look to the Orthodox Churches, whose tradition is more like our own. This attempt to "prove the Church", and this anxious search for tradition are Calvinist or Protestant in origin, however they seek to clothe themselves in "Catholic" forms. But, unfortunately, they have set up a reaction among other schools of thought, and have led Evangelicals and others to deny or undervalue many of our more permanent and typical traditions, including our form of ministry which is the tradition of the tradition. Here again the question about justification by faith and grace needs to be asked, and strongly pressed.

The Lutherans, of course, form a class apart. They of all the Reformers on the Continent were strongest in affirming their acceptance of the old Church as a datum. They retained more of ornament and ceremony and eucharistic devotion than did the Anglican for a long time after the Reformation. In matters of order, however, they were careless, and we see among Lutherans episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems existing side by side in different local Churches. We cannot so much question their belief in justification by faith, but we can surely dare to ask a question about the consistency of their belief in the Church and the ministry!

Revivals, whether "Catholic" or "Evangelical", do not mean the hewing out of new and broken cisterns. In so far as they lead to a real recovery of eternal truth, they are a reopening of ancient wells which the Philistines had stopped. The Church means revival against the background of survival; the conversion and regeneration of the baptized; the Church of all the ages reborn in this age. It is a virgin-birth and a genealogy. The virgin-birth alone justifies; but the genealogy goes back to Christ and his Apostles and the first missionaries who planted the Church on our shores, and a great deal depends on our answer to the question, "When did your Church begin?"

COSSLETT QUINN.

Overseers and Bishops

I AM more and more impressed with the frequency of our misunderstandings of one another, especially when we rely on the printed word: were not Anglicans, more learned than I can claim to be, taken severely to task, not long ago, because they rashly supposed *sola fide* to mean "by faith alone"? Moreover, if the Devil can

quote Scripture, it is presumably possible for an Anglican to quote and misapply the Westminster Confession. It is a good principle, certainly it is an Anglican one, to let the living voice interpret the written word. And in fact much of this article is based on answers which several Free Churchmen have been good enough to give me to questions which I submitted.[1] I may say that one of them told me I was asking the wrong questions, and so not likely to discover the essence of the matter; another was kind enough to say they were natural questions for an Anglican to ask.

In relation to the suggestion that the Free Churches should take episcopacy into their systems, it is, of course, clear that in the sense of pastoral supervision the Free Churches have, and always have had, episcopacy in the general sense of episcope: this is admitted, or rather emphasized, by Dom Gregory Dix.[2] To no small extent a Free Church minister, like an Anglican incumbent, does what those who in the primitive Church had the title "bishop" did.[3] Nor, for that matter, is pastoral supervision in the general sense confined to the ordained Free Church ministry: Methodists regard their class-leaders as sharing in it, and even the Quakers have officials whom they call "overseers", and who are said to have very heavy responsibilities.

But of course there is more to it than this. All ordained ministers of any Communion, and some lay-people, exercise pastoral supervision. But for the first fifteen hundred years of the Church all Christians, and for the past four hundred years most Christians, have considered a smaller group of clergy, in the first century called apostles, and since then bishops, to possess episcopal or supervisory responsibility in a special sense: an important part of their function has been to shepherd the shepherds and to pass on the shepherd's apostolic commission. To what extent do the Free Churches have overseers, superintendents, chairmen, bishops, call them what you will, and how much do their functions diverge from those of the historic episcopal ministry? How far are they right in so diverging? I shall not refer to the question of Apostolic Succession, which is indeed the central and crucial issue: that would take far too long: and it is perhaps worth while to tackle the outlying difficulties first, before making any attempt on the central citadel.

Let us, then, glance over those who may be called quasi-episcopal persons, or overseers, in the Free or non-episcopal or Protestant Communions. Their functions and positions and responsibilities naturally differ in the various Communions.

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[1] I should like to thank, among others, the following Free Church men who have, either verbally or in writing, answered questions which I put to them: the Rev. J. O. Barrett, General Superintendent of the N.E. Area for the Baptist Union; the Rev. E. Fenn, Editorial Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society; the Rev. W. F. Flemington, Tutor at Wesley House, Cambridge; and the Rev. G. F. Nuttall, D.D., Lecturer in Church History at New College, London. They are, of course, not responsible for anything I have written here; as one of them reminds me, it is only too possible for us to get hold of the wrong end of each other's stick.

[2] In *The Apostolic Ministry*, p. 295.

[3] Bishop K. D. Mackenzie, ibid., p. 481.

Since it is claimed that every Presbyterian minister is a bishop, it might be thought more proper to speak of Presbyterian Moderators as archi-episcopal. However that may be, Presbyterians have had superintendents, and now in all countries have Moderators: in Hungary, indeed, they are called "bishops", but the position of Hungarian Reformed bishops does not differ significantly from that of Presbyterian Moderators elsewhere. A Moderator (apart from the minister of a church who may be appointed "interim moderator" of a neighbouring church temporarily without a minister) is the Moderator either of a presbytery (corresponding to a small Anglican diocese or a large rural deanery), or of the General Assembly of a Presbyterian Church in one country. The latter may be pretty well a whole-time job, the former is taken in a man's stride, in addition to his normal responsibilities. The Moderator presides at meetings and visits the churches of his presbytery or the presbyteries of the larger area, but of himself has little or no real authority: he reports to the kirk session, the presbytery, and the General Assembly. No meetings of Moderators are held apart from the General Assembly. In regard to the appointments of ministers, the Moderator can advise and influence only.

A Methodist superintendent exercises oversight over other ministers and lay preachers, and is claimed to be the counterpart of the early bishop. But in a wider sense supervision lies with the chairman of a district. In American Methodism the corresponding person is called a bishop, and appears to have autocratic powers, unlike bishops who claim, as the Methodist bishop does not, to be in the historic episcopal succession. The Methodist chairman presides at the district synod, and the chairmen form part of the stationing committee, covering the whole country, which is responsible for ministerial appointments. Of the forty-six Methodist districts in Great Britain, about one-third have "separated" (that is, whole-time) chairmen. The chairman visits each circuit in his district at least once a year. The chairmen meet very often, sometimes, but not always, with others. In addition, the British Methodist Church has at its head a President: the Presidency is a whole-time office during the year which it lasts. The President need not have been a chairman first: neither chairman nor President is consecrated to his office. American Methodists, however, use a form of consecration for their bishops, which is different from that for the ordination of presbyters and deacons.

English Congregational Moderators date only from about 1920: the Congregational Unions of Scotland and Ireland do not have Moderators, nor does the Union of Welsh Independents. In American Congregationalism, each State conference has a superintendent: this official does little to oversee local churches except those which are weak—in these cases he gives a good deal of practical as well as moral assistance to the local congregation: in regard to the larger churches, the superintendent's main function is where dispute and division arise to do what he can to moderate and adjust the difficulties. He also does much to persuade ingenuous committeemen in choosing a

minister to recognize sound and solid, not merely plausible and superficial, qualities. English Congregationalism is divided into six provinces, each of which has a Moderator: he helps in every way possible with all problems of ministers and churches, especially with "settlements" and "removals" of ministers, and usually presides at the induction (or recognition) service of a new pastor. But these can all take place without consulting the Moderator. The Moderators are whole-time officials, and there are meetings of Moderators. Mr J. G. Weller[1] also, in claiming that Congregationalists have empirical and unmitred bishops, instances union secretaries and outstanding individuals (here he seems to an Anglican to betray a curious conception of episcopate).

The Baptist Union of England and Wales in 1915 appointed a General Superintendent for each of ten areas. The Superintendent in general acts as guide, counsellor, and friend: and most ministerial settlements (that is, appointments) are effected through him: he has no power of discipline. The Superintendents are whole-time officials and meet once a month for a day's conference: they also have an annual conference lasting two days. American Baptists do not have such officials.

In Germany the Evangelical Church has various officials called bishop or general superintendent. It also has officers with the title prelate (Prälat), but so far as I know they do nothing to which the most blameless Free Churchman could take exception.

Free Church overseers, to use a general term, seem to act as instruments of unity between Christians in various places, and may be said in general to represent the large church to the small group, and the local church to the large church. The extent of this influence naturally varies according as more or less significance is attached to overseership.

Methodist chairmen are said not to be instruments of continuity: the President more nearly approaches it: such continuity as there is here is valued more by some than by others. In neither case is there any question of consecration by those who already hold the office, that is, of transmission of office. The office of the Presbyterian Moderator, not the man himself, is said to provide continuity: but continuity resides more in the Permanent Assembly (or Presbytery) clerk, and with the General Secretary of the General Assembly, who have no official status as overseers. Moderators are not consecrated. Some Presbyterians claim, and may value highly, a presbyteral succession: but Congregationalist ministers, who lack it, are accepted without difficulty without re-ordination. Lutherans lay no stress on continuity in what they regard as a matter of mere organization, which is a thing indifferent. Congregationalists repudiate any question of succession in the Moderatorship, any more than in the ministry in general: the ordination is traced not "back" but "up", not through an "order" of sacramentally "consecrated" persons, but through the "congregation" of spiritually "consecrated" people up

[1] In *The Christian World*, 23 July 1953.

to the present living Lord. Some at least of the Free Churches are coming instead to stress continuity and succession in doctrine. Few Free Churchmen claim continuity through the medieval bishops, and many, especially in the past, strenuously repudiated such continuity.

Overseers in the Free Churches have no function corresponding to episcopal confirmation and the opportunity which this offers to the bishop of contact with the ordinary members of his flock. It is the local minister who admits to church membership. It is, however, to be noted that Mr J. M. Ross has suggested[1] that many Presbyterian young people might prefer that the most important occasion in their lives (reception into full membership of the Church) should be marked by personal contact with their overseer. Dr N. Micklem has written[2] that it would not violate any Congregational principle if Congregational churches should come to decide that admission to full membership should take place on some one day in the year, and that the Moderator should be invited to preside at that service. Mr J. G. Weller declares[3] that the Congregational service of reception into full covenant membership is too often a sadly meagre and impoverished thing: Congregationalists should consider some Congregational equivalent of confirmation by a bishop, the Moderator taking his place with the local minister at the service, so as to make more explicit its local and catholic significance. The Methodist Committee on Faith and Order, much more cautiously, as befits an official statement, in regard to the report "Church Relations in England", recently declared that if no exclusive claims were made for episcopacy, and if presbyters were associated with bishops in the rite, the possibility of episcopal administration of confirmation becoming the general practice might be sympathetically considered.

So far as I know, none of the Free Churches regard an overseer as the necessary minister of ordination, though the overseer may in practice normally be present and take part. English Methodist ordination is conferred at the direction of the Methodist conference, and normally is conducted by more than one minister. Most ordinations are conducted during the time of the Annual Conference, and are conducted by the President or an ex-President: but ordination is not in principle, though in practice it largely is, restricted to Presidents and Chairmen. For a Presbyterian ordination, a Moderator is indeed in a sense essential: the Moderator takes the lead "in presbytery" at an ordination, and he and other ministers lay on hands: but if the Moderatorship is vacant, the presbytery appoints an acting Moderator—without such a presbytery cannot be constituted, and without a presbytery an ordination cannot be conducted. The decision as to the suitability of a candidate for ordination lies with the presbytery—there is no question of the Moderator having a veto, and he has sometimes to take part in the ordination of someone whom he may think unsuitable. A Baptist Superintendent, on the

[1] In his pamphlet *Presbyterian Bishops*.
[2] In his pamphlet *Congregationalism and Episcopacy*.
[3] In *The Christian World*, 23 July 1953.

other hand, would not participate in the ordination of a man he thought unsuitable: but of course that does not mean that he has more authority, but rather that he is less necessary. A Congregationalist Moderator normally, but by no means necessarily, takes part in the ordination of a Congregational minister. If a Baptist General Superintendent conducts an ordination, it is only at the request of both the ordinand and the local church concerned: moreover, the ordination is often conducted by the Principal of the theological college where the ordinand was trained.

The subject of grace is apt to rouse heated feeling and negative statements. But on the whole it seems that Free Church overseers are regarded as channels of grace, though not, it is emphasized, in any special or exclusive way, or other than all ministers and indeed devout lay-people, or otherwise than always through prayer or worship. It is true that Dr W. B. Selbie wrote[1] that Congregational ordainers have no power to confer grace: but he probably meant no special power. An American Congregationalist informed me that his Communion does not regard its ministers as communicating divine grace, and that this would hold for its superintendents also. The (or a) Baptist view is that General Superintendents, other ministers and laymen (functioning for example as lay preachers) are on the same footing—they do not communicate grace in virtue of their office or ordination, but only in the measure in which God's Spirit indwells them and they are devoted to his service.

Free Church overseers do not seem to be regarded in principle, as are bishops, as responsible for the maintenance and definition of the Faith, in the sense that they have a power of veto on changes of doctrine. But naturally they have considerable influence, and this influence may in practice amount very nearly to a veto. A Presbyterian heresy trial would be in the General Assembly, and the Moderator could play a big part in handling it: leading ministers could in practice, but not in theory, exercise a veto in regard to change of doctrine. The Baptist Board of General Superintendents would, it is said, certainly be asked for its judgment in regard to any suggested major change; but it has no special responsibility in regard to doctrine or policy. It is also said that the Baptist Union would not in fact change its basis against the judgment of its leading ministers —they would take part in the discussions and powerfully influence the decisions taken. Moreover, a General Superintendent would take some action if a particular minister or church was not maintaining the Faith as commonly understood by Baptists. Mr J. M. Ross has written[2] that it would be very difficult for bishops to guide their flocks on principles of which they did not approve, and that there is accordingly something to be said for recognizing a special responsibility in this matter. Dr Micklem has written[3] similarly: in Congregationalism, he says, ministers trained in theology have a special responsibility for sound doctrine, and it is as difficult to envisage the Congregational Union changing its doctrinal basis in opposition to

[1] In *Congregationalism*, p. 190. [2] Op. cit. [3] Op. cit.

the judgment of its leading ministers as without the consent of deacons and Church members.

The tenure of office of overseers in the Free Churches varies, but is in no case (with the exception perhaps of American Methodist bishops) lifelong. And it is always emphasized most strongly that the overseership is an office and not an order: when his term of office expires, the overseer reverts to the position of an ordinary minister and retains no special responsibility or standing: that is, in technical language, overseership is not indelible. An English Methodist chairman is technically appointed only for a year at a time. Presbyterian Moderators are elected for a year, and it is unheard of for one to be re-elected, except occasionally after an interval of some years: in a presbytery, many, if not most, of the ministers will sooner or later be Moderator (in addition to their normal responsibilities): some of them naturally are a good deal more adequate for this task than are others. A Congregational Moderator is appointed for five years, and is usually re-elected for a second term. Mr Weller emphasizes[1] that the Moderator's ministry is not different in kind or status, but only in function, from that of the local pastor: it is ministerial, not imposed but freely accepted: there should always be but the one order of ministry, and so no hierarchy and no prelates. American Congregationalist Moderators are formally consecrated, it is stated, to their task: their appointments are usually renewed annually: but they are definitely not an order. A Baptist General Superintendent is appointed for five years, and may be re-appointed: the Superintendents are not an order, but an office, and continue members of the general brotherhood of Baptist ministers.

It is sometimes said that the historic episcopate should be regarded as purely administrative and governmental: and some Free Churchmen declare that, so far as it is only that, they may have no objection to it, or perhaps that episcopacy presents little appeal unless it offers exceptional administrative advantages. It is therefore interesting and important to realize that Free Church overseers are by no means purely administrative, and may even have very little to do with administration. Baptist Superintendents, for example, it is stated, are not purely administrative, but are primarily under-shepherds of Christ, to serve and care for churches and ministers. In Presbyterianism, administration is the work of the clerks: Moderators are hardly at all administrators: rather, they are spiritual guides. A Congregationalist described it as offensive to ask whether a Congregationalist Moderator is purely administrative. Mr Weller, urging that more should be made of Congregational Moderators, argues that this implies less, not more, administration. And the Baptist Union seems in effect to recognize that Faith and Order cannot be entirely disassociated as if they had no bearing on each other: its committee, considering the "Church Relations" report, declared that acceptance of episcopacy would jeopardize some of the cherished convictions on which Baptists build and which they believe they hold in trust for the whole Church.

[1] Op. cit.

There seems at least in some Free Church quarters (sometimes where one might least expect it) a definite tendency to make more use of, and give more scope to, episcopal persons or overseers;: this may be, probably usually is, not so much from a desire to draw closer to, and unite with, traditional episcopal churches (often indeed it seems to be in spite of the fact that it would seem to draw them closer to these), as from a desire to make the Free Churches more effective. We have had occasion more than once to quote Mr J. G. Weller's recent article urging that more should be made of Congregationalist Moderators. It is said that English Baptist churches, large and small, aided and unaided, are turning increasingly to the Superintendent for advice (may one also say guidance?), and that this office cannot but be of increasing importance. An American Congregationalist, Dr R. H. Stafford, writes[1] that whereas the superintendents of State conferences were formerly chosen from second-rate pastors, recently stronger men have been elected: most of the Superintendents are now able men, and there has been an astonishing up-grading, and the present tendency is to magnify rather than diminish the office: even the most important churches will hardly call new pastors nowadays without at least consulting the Superintendent.

Yet it would be completely unrealistic not to admit that the traditional objections to episcopacy, and misunderstandings of it, are still very strong: these seem largely to be based on a negative reaction from abuses of episcopacy in the sixteenth century, and on a failure to distinguish in the Church of England between what is mere accident of history, and unimportant, and what is a matter of principle: they may indeed be strengthened by dislike of the modern tendency to centralization, which, however, is not really relevant to the question of episcopacy.

It is claimed, for example, that episcopacy means despotism and autocracy, or what Free Churchmen call "prelacy". Dr E. A. Payne[2] sees episcopacy as "almost inevitably bound up with matters of prestige, privilege, and authority which fit ill with the nature and method of Christ's mission". But the actual administrative powers of Anglican bishops have varied, and do vary in different provinces or even different dioceses of the same province, enormously: in this sense, episcopacy is a very flexible institution. It is perhaps natural to suppose that a king or queen has more power than a president, but of course that is very far from being necessarily the case. None would deny that episcopacy should be ministerial rather than prelatical—and surely this applies to the ordinary parson also. Some Presbyterians admit that their insistence on leaving all decision to committees rather than any individual person is in practice exceedingly slow and cumbrous, and that the annual limit on moderatorship is ridiculous. It is also relevant to recall that the Salvation Army at first worked entirely through committees, and was only led by

[1] In a paper, "Congregationalism in its Representative Bodies", read to the Seventh International Congregational Council in June 1953.

[2] In THEOLOGY, June 1951, p. 213.

experience to abandon this for what I suppose is a hierarchical structure.

It is also argued that episcopacy is made an exclusive channel of grace and a *sine qua non* or guarantee of valid sacraments. Free Churchmen, on the other hand, believe that they have known the presence of their Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit in their sacraments and otherwise. Such a charge seems unjustified in view of the Anglican recognition of Free Church ministries as real and spiritually effective means of grace.

There is no question of any special grace being received through a bishop or through sacraments celebrated by an episcopally ordained priest: grace, on the Anglican view at all events, is not like petrol obtainable in superior and inferior brands—grace is one. Nor does anyone claim that continuity, unity, government, and so on are exclusively the business of bishops.

Various other objections also are brought against traditional or catholic episcopacy. It is alleged that it has not in fact preserved either unity or purity of doctrine. To this one can only answer that the fissiparousness of Protestantism has become a byword, and that such things after all are relative: it seems incontrovertible that it has acted as a check, at least, on the human tendency to divisiveness: this is even clearer in the U.S.A. than in England. And the episcopal Churches have preserved historic Christian doctrine better than have some at least of the Free Churches—not all of which, incidentally, would anyhow be so much concerned to maintain the historic faith as distinct from "following the gleam".

It is often charged against the upholders of episcopacy that they are legalistic. But Dr Micklem writes[1] that it should not be said of Congregationalists that their churches have no rules and everybody can do exactly as he pleases. Presumably I am legalistic if I insist on a rule which you think bad or unnecessary. Legalism is said to be external and opposed to the true inwardness of the spirit: but it is not impossible for a husband and wife to be at one and the same time both legally married and affectionate towards each other: indeed, the legal aspect may be the bulwark of continuing affection and fidelity.

Dr C. J. Cadoux criticized[2] especially those who upheld episcopacy without regarding it as necessary. But most Free Church criticism is directed rather against those who regard it as not only desirable but necessary: and this criticism holds whether episcopacy is regarded purely as a form of church government or not. But is the distinction between *esse* and *bene esse* in this connexion really tenable? If in an important matter something is highly desirable, should it not also be necessary? Moreover, a good deal of ambiguity lurks in the word "necessary". What is in theory not necessary may in practice be necessary. To regard episcopacy as necessary is far from meaning, as Mr Bernard Manning claimed, that without bishops there is no

[1] In *Congregationalism and Episcopacy*.
[2] Ed. K. Mackenzie, *Union of Christendom*, p. 518.

salvation—this is a grotesque misunderstanding. The bishop is one organ in the Body of Christ which requires all its organs for wholeness, each performing its proper office: so there is no question of exclusiveness: the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of thee."

Lastly, there is one more fundamental objection that is made by the Free Churches to catholic episcopacy, one more mark of episcope as the Free Churches know it. Free Church overseers, it is always stressed, do not form an order, as do bishops in the episcopal Churches: theirs is simply an office. It is usually of limited, perhaps very limited, duration. That, however, is not the essential point. When the overseer vacates his office, he becomes as though he had never held it. And this, I believe, holds even of American Methodists if they are appointed for life: if they resign their office, they no longer have episcopal standing. There is, in fact, no question of indelible orders. On the other hand, there is, as we have seen, a definite tendency, to use the phrase of Free Churchmen themselves, to magnify the overseer's office, to extend it and to defer to it. It has been suggested, by one of themselves, that the Free Churches are suffering because they have no representative leaders in the life of the nation. The Archbishop of Canterbury, it is said, is not changed every year: over a period of years he becomes known to the public, and is able to speak in the name of his Church: surely the Free Churches would gain if the Moderator of the Federal Council remained in office some years and had time to win a place in the life of the nation: he cannot do this during a Moderatorship of one year, as at present.[1]

And in fact Free Churchmen do not seem to treat former holders of the office as purely on a par with those who have never held it, as in theory they should. The Scottish Presbyterian Church even gives its ex-Moderators a special title ("Very Reverend"): the English Presbyterians, realizing, it seems to an Anglican, that this was to sell the Presbyterian pass, definitely declined to follow suit. Here again it is difficult not to feel that the Free Churches are involved in a largely negative and sterile reaction against past abuses of episcopacy, and so are struggling against what is natural. If the overseer receives God's grace for his task, whether or not he is formally consecrated, he is likely to grow in grace and knowledge and power in response to the opportunities provided by his office. *Can* he really become as though he had never held it?

Free Churchmen often object to the numinous or sacramental or mystic aura or sacerdotal mysticism which episcopacy is said to have attracted to itself—and this presumably is lacking in Free Church overseership. Here is something which cannot be argued about. Associations attach themselves to many things: what is important is what the thing is, and of what sort is the association.

It would be a pity to maintain a barren and negative reaction against episcopacy as it has on occasion been in the past. Let the Free Churches, on the one hand, accept historic episcopacy in the fullest

[1] A. G. in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 6 April 1950.

and most thoroughgoing sense, not merely as a form of administration, and not merely attaching no meaning to it. On the other hand, let them remember what Bishop K. D. Mackenzie has said,[1] that those who for a time have lost episcopacy may eventually help us all to come to a truer understanding and practice of it: and let them stress the positive values of Free Church episcope, in particular the wide diffusion of responsibility among both all ordained ministers and the faithful laity: for in this respect the various episcopal Communions can and should all learn not a little from the episcope of the Free Churches.

G. F. S. Gray.

A Modern Defence of Infallibility

Sixty-six years after the first edition of Salmon's *Infallibility* a book by a Roman Catholic author explicitly answering it has appeared. The answer was evoked by an abridged version of the *Infallibility* edited by Dr H. F. Woodhouse and published in 1952.

Abbot Butler should on the whole be congratulated on the restraint and the reasonable tone of his book.[2] Salmon himself never pulled his punches, and Butler allows himself some fairly cutting expressions; but the subject is an intensely controversial one and we cannot expect a Roman Catholic writer's words on the subject to be all honey and gentleness. Salmon's book had some obvious faults. It was entirely unconstructive in its approach to the subject; it suffered from an occasionally offensive cocksureness; its approach to the criticism of the New Testament was what we would now call immature (though in his day Salmon was a remarkably judicious New Testament scholar). Abbot Butler makes the most of these faults, as he justly may. It is true that his own handling of the New Testament is timid, to say the least of it. Though he has read Cullmann, in the French edition, on the *locus vexatus* in Matthew 16, he does not mention G. D. Kilpatrick's book on Matthew, which was published earlier than Cullmann's and which we have found far more convincing than Cullmann (or for that matter K. L. Schmidt's article) on the passage concerned. But on the whole Abbot Butler deals fairly with Salmon, and does not leave his work unimpaired. On many points of fact, and on some of theology, he has the better of the older scholar.

But it is not the object of this article directly to defend Salmon or to compare the Abridgement minutely with *The Church and Infallibility*. It is of more interest and importance to consider the principles upon which this able modern Roman scholar bases his defence of the Infallibility of the Church.

He rests his defence on three main arguments. The first of these is the argument from history. He emphasizes again and again that there is no justification for distinguishing the true Church from the visible,

[1] *The Apostolic Ministry*, p. 466.

[2] *The Church and Infallibility*, by B. C. Butler, Abbot of Downside. Sheed and Ward. 12s. 6d.

institutional Church; that our Lord intended there to be only one visible Church; that to split off from that Church in any circumstances and for any reasons whatever is sinful; that communion with the Roman see has always been a *sine qua non* of catholicity, for the Roman Catholic Church to-day is and always has been the true original Catholic Church; and that as such it is incapable of schism and endowed with Infallibility by God. This thesis he undertakes to prove from the history of the Christian Church, beginning from the Gospels. His handling of this case is, as one might expect, while he has to deal with the first two centuries, tentative and inclined to rely on hints and suggestions rather than facts, as he reaches the third century more confident and readier to produce concrete evidence, fuller and stronger in the fourth century, and by the time he reaches the fifth and sixth centuries positively triumphant. He ends his case with an impressive but outrageous quotation (p. 201) from Chapman's *The Condemnation of Pope Honorius*: "It is a matter of history that no Pope has ever involved the whole Church in error. . . . It is a matter of history that Rome has always retained the true faith."

Perhaps it is inevitable that so highly partisan a review of history unfolded in such a necessarily small compass should take on the appearance of a caricature. To Abbot Butler those periods of history where the whole Church appeared to recognize Papal claims are clear, unmistakable, and simple arguments in his favour; those periods where it showed no discernible signs of doing so are shrouded in obscurity or entirely uncharacteristic ("difficulties of detail, like eddies in the general current", p. 181). But when we find him (pp. 43 and 124) claiming Origen as a believer in the third century in the Infallibility of the Church, and as a witness to the general belief in it in the third century, we can estimate the value of the rest of his interpretation of history. Origen encouraged his students to set aside the Church's rule of faith, positively wrote against practices which he must have known to be based on what Abbot Butler would call unimpeachable Catholic tradition, and declared that the authority of bishops was limited by their moral character (see *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, pp. 105–9, 177–8). And Origen was, as Roman Catholic scholars have so often pointed out, in many ways a typical third-century churchman.[1] But even Butler's quotations from the literature of the fourth and later centuries establish no more than that the writers quoted believed that the Church is one, and that it teaches the truth. They scarcely advance an inch towards evincing knowledge of the modern Roman theory of Infallibility. Nor do instances taken from the history of these early centuries preclude us from using history ourselves to argue that Christ's Church is no longer one, and that the Pope has on several occasions led (or attempted to lead, which is as damaging to Butler's and Chapman's

[1] Butler is unfortunate in quoting on p. 43 a highly suspect passage from Rufinus' translation of the *De Principiis*; see *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, chapter II, and especially p. 46, n. 3. Is Butler relying on the too uncritical Symonds here?

arguments) the whole Church into error. The theory that Christ's visible Church can only be a single institution was gravely shaken by the Monophysite controversy, rendered very precarious by the rift between East and West in the eleventh century, and (we cannot help believing) proved utterly untenable, even on Roman Catholic principles, over a century before the Reformation by the great Schism of 1378–1414. This was surely, even by Roman Catholic standards, the division of the indivisible. It was also one of the most inescapable instances of the Pope leading the whole Church into error. Chapman's assertion depends, of course, upon what meaning is attached to "the whole Church" and to "error". It could be reasonably argued (though we have not quite the temerity to say that it is a matter of history) that the Popes have regularly been leading the whole Church into error ever since they began making their peculiar claims, and that recent examples of this fallibility have been provided by Popes Pius V and Urban VIII (over the case of Galileo), Pius IX, Pius X, and, not least remarkable in error, Pius XII.

Abbot Butler's second main argument in defence of Infallibility consists of a careful definition of the nature of Infallibility. He defines both the nature of the individual Roman Catholic's belief in the Church's Infallibility and the nature of Papal Infallibility itself. This is perhaps the most valuable part of his book, because he leaves his readers in no doubt about these points, which have in the past been often misunderstood by non-Roman scholars. He distinguishes between Infallibility and certainty. Certainty is a deep conviction, Infallibility a proposition; one does not believe in the Church's Infallibility, one believes that the Church is infallible (pp. 46–8). But when the Roman Catholic makes an act of faith, submitting himself to God as revealed in his Church, "God bestows upon him a supernatural certainty which in no sense presupposes the infallibility of his previous reasoning, but is a reflection of the 'evidence' of the revealed truth" (p. 55). It is useful to have these definitions, but we cannot see how in fact they deliver the Roman Catholic from the relative and fallible nature of all human assurance into an objective state of assurance enjoyed by no other Christians. Any Roman Catholic's conviction that his Church is infallible may vary or be overthrown just as much as can an Anglican's conviction that the Roman Church is not infallible. What happens to the supernatural conviction of the thousands of Roman Catholics who every year become members of other communions? To the outsider, at least, this supernatural certainty is no more than a conviction that God has bestowed a supernatural certainty.

The Infallibility of the Pope Abbot Butler confines to very narrow limits in strict accordance with the definition of the Vatican Council (pp. 70–71), so that the Pope is not necessarily infallible even in the reasons by which he is led, or on which he relies, to make an infallible definition, or in the prefaces and introductions to his definitions. He is infallible only in "the final step, the resulting definition or dogma". By this strict limitation, the many cases of blunders or hesitation adduced by Salmon can be evaded. They none

of them, according to Butler, fulfilled the conditions laid down by the Vatican definition, conditions so exacting that only on a few occasions in history can Infallibility have been exercised. This would be a reasonable and honest defence did not Butler also continually write as if this occasional, oracular, fugitive Infallibility gave a general guarantee of Infallibility to the whole Roman Church. "The infallible decision", he says (p. 69), "is not usually a sudden 'snap decision', but the majestic termination of an agelong pondering by the 'divine society' upon the significance of the truths and gifts entrusted to her by her Lord and Founder." And he claims (pp. 85–6) that the Church's Infallibility ("with which", he says, "that of the Pope is not only comparable but identical") gives "a colour and cast to the whole teaching and mind of the Church". The Roman Catholic consequently enjoys "a world of corporate thought and belief at the back of which is a divine guarantee of objectivity".

This seems to us to be an entire *non-sequitur*. There are, by the definition of the Vatican Council, as well as by the obvious conclusions of common sense, no degrees of Infallibility (and Butler seems to admit this in his footnotes on p. 201). If Roman Catholic scholars like to avoid the difficulties provided by historical instances such as the cases of Liberius, Vigilius, Pius V, and Urban VIII by closely limiting Infallibility, that is a fair argument. But they must not at the same time imagine that they are free to throw this attenuated cloak of Infallibility over the whole of their Church. When Liberius signed the two formulas of Sirmium, where was that "world of corporate thought and belief at the back of which is a divine guarantee of objectivity"? How could Vigilius' hesitations, Honorius' admitted heresy, and the egregious failure of Pius V and Urban VIII to recognize the limits of Scriptural doctrine have failed to give "a colour and cast" of error to the whole teaching of their Church? We cannot seriously be expected to believe that the Pope's occasional Infallibility gives a general air of rightness to the whole Roman Church, whereas his occasional (but, on the Vatican definition, more frequent) errors affect it not at all. By all means confine to a very small compass the moves of this awkward chess-king of Infallibility who can be so easily checkmated if he is allowed free movement, but do not at the same time claim that in some mysterious way he can range all over the board like a queen.

And how improbable, *on the basis of the Vatican definition*, does this talk of a "majestic pondering" appear! A Pope whose Infallibility does not apply even to the reasons by which he arrives at his definitions is not the mouthpiece of a majestic and agelong pondering, but a surrealist oracle. And can even Roman Catholics really believe that the conviction that the Blessed Virgin was assumed corporeally into heaven is the sort of conviction that can best be arrived at after nearly two thousand years of pondering? How hasty and immature of the first generation of Christians to make up their minds so swiftly that our Lord was raised from the dead! How rash of them to include this as an article of their creed after less than a thousand years' consideration! Careful definition does not, we fear,

improve the case for the Church's Infallibility. Salmon set out to prove that it is impossible to believe that the Pope is an infallible guide. Butler's reply, that it is not as a guide that he is infallible, leaves the argument for Infallibility in a worse case than before.

The author's third main argument in defence of Infallibility is Newman's theory of the development of doctrine, reproduced with a confidence so unconscious of the consequences the theory entails as to be astonishing. The Christian faith is like a child growing into an adult (p. 5); like a stream growing into a river (Newman's image, pp. 6–7). Protestant doctrine is unfortunate in that it does not exhibit this phenomenon of vitality (p. 6). Non-Catholic theology is doomed, as it does not "increase and multiply" (quoting a sermon of Newman, p. 62). And what is multiplied is not merely ecclesiastical doctrine, but (to adapt a phrase on p. 20) constituent elements of the Christian revelation. The vitality and divine authority of the Roman Church is apparently demonstrated by its capacity to add ever-new constituent elements to the Christian revelation, or at least to claim that it has at last discovered them. The Geiger counter of this extraordinary process of discovering revelation is the Roman concept of tradition, a concept which, as Abbot Butler outlines it, is almost pure fantasy. In order to prove the truth of any recent Roman dogma, all that Roman Catholic theologians need is the concession that "the scriptural evidence is not demonstrably inconsistent with Catholic belief" (p. 104), and as the Roman Church reserves to itself the right to determine what is and what is not demonstrably inconsistent, the matter is easily solved. This is the real point (which neither Salmon nor Butler has seen) of Cardinal Manning's rejection of the appeal to antiquity.

This claim for the development of revelation is clearly the most important of the three points upon which the modern case for Infallibility rests, and we should realize that it is the weakest of the three. Salmon was *au fond* right when he claimed that Roman Catholic theologians, beaten off the fields of Scripture and history, have now taken refuge in fantasy and theory-spinning. Perhaps it would be truer to say that, beaten off these fields, they have now returned to them armed with the new device of Tradition which enables them to become air-borne and float away from those fields when they like. The theory of an original, continuous, authentic, oral tradition of doctrine from which can be supplemented the data provided by the Bible and which is itself independent of the Bible is a sheer invention, a theologians' device to explain away awkward facts. Christian doctrine certainly has developed, but *revelation* has not. It did not please God to save men by a revealed body of doctrines. The Bible was canonized by the Church largely to prevent people from doing exactly what the Roman Church is now doing—allowing untrustworthy oral tradition to take the place of early well-authenticated evidence. The Bible is *evidence*, witness, to which the Church in the early centuries was glad to submit herself, by which she limited herself, by which her *magisterium* was controlled. Before the New Testament was written she was controlled by an unwritten

tradition now represented (and to all intents and purposes exclusively represented) by the New Testament. If Roman Catholics claim that to be in communion with the Bishop of Rome is a necessary part of the organic life of the Catholic Church, we can reply, with far more facts to support us, that to be controlled by this Biblical tradition is a necessary part of the organic life of the Catholic Church.

Newman's fundamental mistake was to assume without ever questioning his assumption that the Bible was a collection of revealed doctrines or a system of revealed theology, instead of a body of early, authentic evidence. Doctrine, ideas about God, can develop indefinitely; evidence (evidence of God's activity) is itself a final criterion, from which only a limited number of conclusions can be drawn. The *homoousios* of Nicaea is an agreed conclusion drawn from Scriptural evidence, and the fact that the undivided Church has agreed upon it does not make it revelation; so is the Chalcedonian Formula, so is the developed doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The dogmas of 1854, 1870, and 1950 are wild speculations which do not even profess to be based on purely Scriptural evidence and are agreed to by not quite fifty per cent. of the Christians in the world. The Bible may be regarded as an unsatisfactory criterion of dogma, but it is at least a comparatively recognizable, stable one. The final criterion which the Roman Church proposes to substitute for it is a theological will-o'-the wisp, "the living mind of the Church". It is a completely unreliable criterion, because it never arrives at any finality whatever; what the "living mind" decides today not to be *de fide* may in fifty, or twenty, years' time be registered as a necessary dogma. And that decision is rendered uncertain as soon as it is uttered, because the "living mind" of 1974 is not the "living mind" of 2004, and will in its turn be superseded by the "living mind" of 2054, and so on, until the Last Judgment. If our refusal to agree to this sort of thing means that Anglican theology has not got vitality or fruitfulness, *Deo gratias* that it has not! This is the vitality of the jungle, a bizarre fecundity paralleled only in Hinduism.

R. P. C. Hanson.

Exit the Exhortation

THE THEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING ITS OMISSION AND NEGLECT

". . . Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord
For all his love. Amen."

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Dearly beloved brethren I pray and beseech you as many as are here present to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace saying after me;" (four commas omitted).

So starts Harvest Evensong, the best-attended service of the year. The effect on the infrequent attender is to confuse him. He has expected the Prayer Book to be a guide to what is to be said. When he finds other words used he loses trust in his Prayer Book as a program, or else thinks he has found the wrong place. Since the

prayers are intended to be common to him as well as to the minister, any omission of the exhortation is dangerous. It assumes either that the people are not going to use their books, or that they know what alterations to expect.

Worse still, the infrequent attender finds himself joining in the general confession at about the third sentence, and saying serious words of confession before he is really ready to. The last thing he was doing was singing thanks to God and he came to a harvest thanksgiving. Can he switch to confession without warning? I doubt it. The Prayer Book is quite sure that he needs a considerable urge before he makes confession. The minister who so cuts the exhortation is making the assumption that his people are all quite ready to admit that they have erred. Sometimes a priest facing the faithful few may feel assured that they are ready to confess, though even they may not be free from a certain sense of self-righteousness. Seaside vicars and clergy taking services where casual visitors are expected can have no excuse for assuming they have a contrite congregation. The more casual they are the more likely they are to feel that they are good to come to church at all. Cathedral clergy who abbreviate the exhortation are making the same assumption, and the further one that people are more edified by what is sung than by what is read (also evidenced by allowing the lovely rendering of psalms to be followed by indifferent reading of lessons).

Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are Bible services. The first reason for people coming to them is that they may hear God's Word. (See para. 3 of "Concerning the service of the church.") The services begin with quotation(s) from the Scriptures. The Prayer Book takes pains to emphasize this by giving the references. The exhortation says: "The Scripture moveth us in sundry places." Surely this reference to the Bible early in the service is vital. These liturgiologists who are always trying to tell us that Evensong proper does not start till after the Lord's Prayer would never have left out the exhortation had it run thus: "Dearly beloved brethren, we are taught by the Church . . ." When you cut the reference to the Scripture, you assume that it does not really matter to people whether what they do in church has the authority of the Bible behind it or not. It is time we got rid of the merchants who believe that the Old and the New Testaments will pass away but the Liturgy will not pass away. The exhortation which gives biblical authority for liturgical practice is important.

Are we, then, always to read all the exhortation? No, but we must always give its message. If we can read this rather olde Englishe properly, then it will pay to do so. It has repetition in its phrasing and therefore needs to be taken without hurry. Some of the words can be said very quickly, e.g. "to the end that", but the pauses must be plain. It must be said or read as exhortation, with a hortatory voice. That means having a hortatory mind. Any minister who doesn't think it needs to be used had better ask some layman to read it for him, someone who knows that people all too easily get self-satisfied.

But it is not an easy exhortation to read, certainly not twice each Sunday *in toto*. Many regular worshippers are used to having it reduced to two sentences. Some may stop listening if they know exactly what is coming, and may be brought to listen by a slight variation. For these reasons a good case may be made for cutting some parts and for variation in the cuts. Leave the book on the desk, turn to the people, remember what you wrote in the parish magazine a few months back ("Dear people, there are a good many places in the Bible where we are urged to admit that we are sinners, where we are told not to pretend in the sight of God. . . .") Then exhort in words of the Prayer Book. One reasonable abbreviation is to go down to "assemble and meet together", omit the four reasons, and use the concluding sentence. There are a score of little abbreviations possible that will still leave anyone following in a prayer book in no doubt that you are giving the sense and spirit of what he is reading.

If it is objected that the common shortening to "Dearly beloved brethren, I pray and beseech you", etc., is the only one approved by authority, one can only say that because of the badness of their voices was it permitted. This abbreviation does not tell us whether we are to confess or thank or intercede. It may be that in the presence of bishops people feel more ready to confess than when it is only the curate.

Turning to the exhortations in the Holy Communion service, are they ever used? The alternative order of 1928 gives the show away in the rubric under "the Preparation": "The priest may say this exhortation, and if this exhortation be not read . . . it shall nevertheless be read . . . and at the least . . ." In other words, it ought to be read but it isn't; give it them once a year. It may be that it comes in the service itself too late. The people have already made up their minds they are going to communicate. But yet it has a challenge, a note that is needed. In what spirit are you going to communicate? The note of challenge follows on into the Invitation: "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent . . ." But all too often the challenge is slurred out by an unctuous voice that puts all the emphasis on "draw near", "holy", and "comfort". What with the omission of the previous exhortation and the slurring over of the challenge to love and charity and new life, one is given the impression that the priest feels he is ministering to saints rather than to sinners. There is an underlying assumption that people must be pretty all right if they come to Holy Communion.

If we want to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word ("Ordering of priests", question 4), it will help to use public exhortations.

P. D. May.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The Rev. Cosslett Quin is Rector of Narraghmore in the diocese of Glendalough.

The Rev. G. F. S. Gray is a Fellow of St Augustine's College, Canterbury.

Dr Hanson is a Lecturer in Theology at the University of Nottingham.

The Rev. P. D. May is Vicar of Netherbury, Bridport.

CORRESPONDENCE

MASSING PRIESTS

To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

DEAR SIR,

The Rev. Charles Williams dismisses the suggestions contained in the article on Massing Priests as being one more addition to a growing collection of suggestions for the reform of the Church, which by implication he classes as being sterile.

He proceeds thereafter to enumerate some of the difficulties which following such a course would entail, and admittedly there are difficulties. But the statement of a difficulty is not the same thing as the raising of a valid objection. Furthermore, if the suggestions can be shown to be firmly rooted in Scripture, then no difficulty can be allowed to stand in the way.

Mr Welbourn's article (in your May number) is as condensed as it is provocative, but is there not a point here which needs prayerful discussion on the widest basis? Is a stipendiary clergy a *sine qua non* of the Church? Are our ordinations of young men today in conformity with the directions of St Paul in 1 Timothy 2 or Titus 1? The ordination of a small trickle of men in middle age into the ranks of the stipendiaries is no exception to this. Must the permanent leaders of the local church always be kept in the ranks of the faithful laity?

At home the Church is seriously hindered by the shortage of clergy. Except in fully staffed parishes, whose number constantly shrinks, no churchman can even have the opportunity of the full regular sacramental life, which in those parishes is pressed upon him as being of obligation. Overseas the position is even more disastrous. Settlers have the opportunity of a service every six months or so, mission areas cannot be enlarged for lack of priests. But the Apostles ordained elders in every Church, and they did not have to go to Jerusalem or Antioch for a theological training first.

The argument for the creation of a body of Voluntary Clergy side by side with the present Stipendiary Clergy has been fully stated in *The Case for Voluntary Clergy,* Roland Allen (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1930). To the best of my knowledge no conclusive objections have yet been raised against it. Mr Welbourn's article breaks a silence on these things that has lasted too long, and reopens a question to which it is high time a positive answer is found.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

JAMES COLLINS.

BROMHAM RECTORY,
CHIPPENHAM, WILTS.

THE ATOMIC AGE

To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

DEAR EDITOR,

Dr Yarnold's sermon printed in your August number, interesting as it is, seems, by omission, to misrepresent the full Christian attitude to the atomic age. Without disagreeing with any one point of his sermon, I cannot help feeling that he has distorted the whole by forgetting to mention that the splitting of the atom has already, once and for all, annihilated the foundation of materialism. No longer has matter any finality. Any metaphysical justification for a materialistic outlook has gone.

I ask, simply, is this an occasion for Christian thanksgiving—for welcoming the atomic age in the spirit of a festival, rather than timidly regarding it as an occasion for another fast?

I am,

Yours, etc.,

EWEN FARM HOUSE,
NEAR CIRENCESTER.

W. S. BOYCOTT.

MISSIONARY METHODS IN AN ENGLISH PARISH

To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

DEAR SIR,

No doubt there will be those amongst your readers who can say, with authority, whether or not in asking the question "Wilt thou take this woman (man) . . . to live together after God's ordinance" the Book of Common Prayer means by the phrase "God's ordinance" what the two Archbishops mean by the set of rules they have recently issued as a short guide for Church membership.

Similarly, in a church which (to quote Dr Garbett) is "as committed to the principle of spiritual liberty as it is to its Catholic heritage" there should be those qualified and ready to say whether or not the administration of a sacrament of the Gospel ought to be contingent on monetary payment on the part of those desiring to receive it.

We are laymen, and as such we do not propose to enter into controversy on these points. We know what our innermost convictions are, and have reason to believe that they are shared by a large number of our Christian neighbours. In view of the article which you publish in the August issue of your journal, however, under the title of "Missionary Methods in an English Parish", we feel that the attention of your readers should be drawn to certain facts which, though already reported in the press, are not mentioned by the author of the article.

On 9 May 1953 the P.C.C. of St Mary's, Woodford, passed the vote of confidence which is quoted by the Rev. J. C. Wansey in his article. The vote at the extraordinary meeting of the council called for 3 September 1953 showed that the number of representatives pre-

pared to express disagreement with the Rector's methods had already grown. The culminating meeting was an extraordinary parochial church meeting, called and presided over by the Bishop of Barking as Archdeacon on 12 January 1954. Thirteen parochial church councillors had sponsored the motion for it, which was in the following terms:

> "That in view of the disruption in the life of the church and parish that has ensued from the Rector's actions and statements, particularly in recent months, he [the Rector] be urged to tender his resignation to the Bishop."

It was passed by a majority of 112 to 48.

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR W. CUFF,
NORMAN HOWDILL,
Lately members of the Parochial Church Council,
St Mary, Woodford.

WOODFORD,
11/8/54.

To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

SIR,

In offering a comment upon the article in your August issue by the Rev. J. C. Wansey, I must first present my credentials. I have known the writer of the article since 1934, and served my title under him in Woodford between 1949 and 1951. Having said that, I now lay myself open to the twin charges of disloyalty and of making havoc of what I once preached. This is not, however, to be interpreted in any way as an "attack" upon Mr Wansey; it is no more than second thoughts about a number of critical points which he has made in his article.

1. He says: "The sacraments are empty of meaning for those whose lives are empty of the 'marks of the Lord Jesus'. What are these distinctive 'marks' which a Christian is to bear about in his body? . . . They are eight in number. . . ." Then follows the Short Guide to the Duties of Church Membership.

Here is a subtle *non sequitur*: the writer seeks to equate the characteristic marks of a Christian with a set of duties which, however unexceptionable they may be, need a great deal of careful interpretation in practice. (I notice that Mr Wansey gives us about two pages of detailed discussion about the duty of giving money, but that he does not devote as much space to suggesting ways in which, for instance, private prayer or the reading of the Bible might be initiated or developed. No one with any perception would deny the importance of conscientious and systematic payment of dues and alms; but this activity is neither the beginning nor the end of Christian discipleship. It is also highly dangerous to advertise one's own claims to have fulfilled this duty; there was a man who gave tithes of all that he possessed, but he was hardly a model of Christian living, because he boasted about it.)

A more serious criticism arises here: Mr Wansey suggests (perhaps inadvertently) that a man is a Christian *because* he fulfils certain duties; surely a man would fulfil certain duties because he was a Christian? The order is important. The "Guide" does no more than indicate ways in which a man may express and examine his discipleship. It does not propound an exact set of rules, or lay down the length of notice required for the Sacraments; it does not suggest that those who do not accept a particular and detailed interpretation of the Duties are "countenancing humbug" in the administration of the Sacraments. It may well be that some converts and lapsed Christians will reach their faith by the way of faithfulness to certain specific and characteristic modes of institutional religious obedience, locally imposed; but not all will come this way. There is no theological guarantee that faithfulness in any particular duties is *antecedent* to faith. Paul often found them the other way round. The error, therefore, of attempting to impose upon everyone the same mode of approach to God in Christ, albeit by a majority vote of a P.C.C., is only to repeat the errors of all religious extremists. In the long run, the real point of the Gospel will be lost, and we shall have another religion of Duty in place of a religion of relationship.

2. Mr Wansey speaks about the need for reform in the administration of Holy Baptism and the solemnization of Holy Matrimony. He tells us that the incumbents of his five neighbouring parishes have not adopted his own exact practices. He then goes on to speak of the consciences (including the consciences of the incumbents concerned) of those who proceed with a service which Mr Wansey himself has felt unable to undertake. This passage reads badly; the spectacle of one incumbent casting sidelong glances at the consciences of his brethren is not edifying. The five incumbents are neither fools nor knaves, and it is just within the bounds of charitable supposition that they are just as much exercised over these grave pastoral problems as Mr Wansey himself, but that they do not feel bound to pursue a rigorous policy, and may never feel that it would be right to do so. It is important to discriminate between moral courage and doctrinaire rigidity.

3. The most alarming passage in the article is that which speaks about the "growing acknowledgment of a parish policy". Undoubtedly such a policy can be very valuable, but it must be a means of bringing men and women into the blessed company of all faithful people, and not of coercing them into following the detailed interpretations of certain selected points which happen to be receiving attention in any one place at any one time. That way lies pharisaism and exclusive sectarianism. "Much of the natural resistance to change", says Mr Wansey, "is hardly more than a façade which a concerted effort will demolish." This may be no more than an idea poorly expressed; but it has the most sinister suggestions in a world of competing authoritarian systems; those who do not accept must be thrust out or beaten down. There are some severe words in the New Testament, but there is also the saying, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." It may be that there are souls coming to

Christ in ways which are not immediately acceptable to the caucus which determines parish policy. What is to happen to them? Are they to be judged by the Consistory? That way lies the harshest form of Genevan Calvinism.

4. The article as a whole gives a regrettable impression of rigidity and cut-and-dried-ness. The writer begins with the correct diagnosis: the Church *is* faced with problems about the baptism of infants whose parents are in no sense practising Christians, and the marriage of couples whose links with the Church are slender indeed. But to speak of "missionary methods" presupposes the underlying task of bringing men and women to a saving knowledge of Christ within the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Can this be achieved, ought it to be attempted, by methods which depend upon institutional rigorism? Surely this is the very issue which divides the Church of England from the Pope?

5. Naturally, a successful enterprise on the lines which Mr Wansey describes will prove attractive, new, and progressive. I confess to having been once strongly persuaded of its virtues. At the risk of being called traitor and turncoat, I now question its value in face of the threat which it offers to individual liberty and responsibility in the sphere of spiritual decisions.

6. The Church of England has a ministry to the nation. If it is to become rigorist, then it becomes Congregational, and the Establishment must go. Yet the Establishment itself is a delicate compromise between freedom and authority, and can be made to work only with tolerance and goodwill. Mr Wansey's article mentions Christian charity, and no doubt intends it; but the general tone of it is far from tolerant. Definition is fashionable, and often valuable; but is intolerance ever a virtue? Do we find in the New Testament a regimented Church?

In the long run, no doubt, such "missionary methods" as those practised in Woodford will be seen to have had a stimulant effect upon the thought and activity of the Church. But those within the Church who have "resisted" them may not always have been as wrong as those who promoted them with more vigour than understanding.

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
F. C. Carpenter.

Sherborne School,
Dorset.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. By M. de Jonge. Van Gorcum and Manchester University Press. 18s.

Jesus and the Future. An Examination of the Criticism of the Eschatological Discourse Mark 13 with special reference to the Little Apocalypse Theory. By G. R. Beasley-Murray. Macmillan. 25s.

Dr de Jonge's doctorial thesis is a work of the highest importance.

He tries to show that the Christian element in the *Testaments* is not that of an interpolator but of the compiler and author of the work, that the work is not a *Jewish* one of the second century B.C. with Christian additions, but a *Christian* one of the second century A.D. based on Jewish haggadic material on the lives of the patriarchs. If he is right, the *Testaments* cannot be used as an influence on the ethics of the New Testament or as throwing light on pre-Christian Jewish hopes of a Levitical Messiah.

Whether he carries his readers all the way with him or not, his work is unmarred by false starts. He is probably right, as against R. H. Charles in his evaluation of the MSS and Versions. And in his detailed approach to the composition of the book he has adopted the correct *method,* which may be loosely called form-critical (p. 38). This work of great thoroughness and freshness entirely merits Prof. T. W. Manson's introductory commendation as "likely to remain for a long time to come the best Introduction to the study of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs".

A strong probability in the thesis seems to be the recognition of original Jewish Testaments of Levi and Naphtali, which suggested the general pattern of a book purporting to record testaments of all *twelve* patriarchs. But was there no independent *Jewish* version of the complete work? That is the negative conclusion which is so difficult to prove. We have to imagine a Christian writer whose Christology is uncompromising and worlds apart from that of Ebionite Christianity, who in a hellenistic environment produces a fundamentally Jewish work. To touch up and expand a work which already exists in Jewish form is one thing. To compile a work for the first time as a Christian production is another. A heavy burden of proof falls on Dr de Jonge. The reviewer is able to follow his picture of the process of composition except in his attempt to show that some passages which cannot be regarded as interpolations or remodellings are Christian. There seems to be no unequivocal passage that does not need subtlety or gifts of allegorical interpretation to detect. If the rumours are true that fragments of a Hebrew or Aramaic version of the *Testaments* have been found at Qumram, then a Jewish stage in the composition of the whole work will remain probable.

Meanwhile the idea of a Levitical Messiah can be forgotten. The original Jewish idea is shown to be simply the exaltation of Levi's priestly office and Judah's kingship. The idea of a Levitical Messiah is a misunderstanding of the difficulties encountered by a Christian redactor trying to connect Christ as high-priest with the tribe of Levi and as king with the tribe of Judah. He has a Jewish Levi-Judah pattern before him and it is not altogether tractable to his purpose. But does not the appearance of this Levi-Judah pattern in various places where there is no hint of Christian alteration argue for the Jewish stage in the composition of the whole work which Dr de Jonge omits?

There are misprints on pp. 41 (2), 86, 104, 107, 159.

Jesus and the Future will take its place as an indispensable aid for

future work on the eschatological teaching of Jesus. The author set out to read everything that has been written on Mark 13 since Colani in 1864 and the result is an excellent piece of explanatory criticism. Not that this kind of survey can ever be quite satisfactory. The summary of a great book of scholarship can too easily make originality look silly. Cullman's work, for example, has a changed appearance under this author's scrutiny because he is made to answer questions in a form different from that in which he himself poses them. But within this limitation Dr Beasley-Murray has told a story of research with a certain exciting quality about it. It is strange that Barth's treatment of the issue in Dogmatic III. 2 is among the omissions.

Dr Beasley-Murray's positive gleanings from his immense industry are conservative. Mark 13 is an authentic discourse of Jesus uttered as a unity in the setting which St Mark describes. Conversely, the hypothesis of a "Little Apocalypse" is false and the ulterior motive in this unscientific theory is exposed. Since Mark 13, with a little help from Q, forms the background to Paul's eschatological teaching in 1 and 2 Thess., it must predate those letters and so rank as "the most ancient document of Christianity". Jesus then expected the parousia within the lifetime of his contemporaries, but there were reasons for this foreshortening of the horizon and he was not and is not thereby discredited. The attempt is made to harmonize this with the evidence that he looked forward to "a period of historical development after his death and resurrection".

There are six special notes, those on the Sign of the Son of Man and the Abomination of Desolation meriting special attention.

As the author himself expresses it, he has sought simply to give an honest answer to every question as it has arisen. This means that he remains, so to speak, below the level of previous contributions. Probably his simplification of the problem of the *structure* of the chapter will be seen to be the Achilles' heel of his work. But he seems to be inhibited also from truly appraising those who approach the issue from what they understand to be the biblical concept of *time*.

There are minor defects. Technical jargon looks ludicrous when Burkitt is described as "competent"! P. 34 reads as though the scruples concerning the Sabbath were to be found in the Markan account. On p. 67 the digression to show what the Bishop of Derby has *not* read is unnecessary! There is something wrong with the sentence at the bottom of p. 62. Olmstead is wrongly spelt on pp. 92, 279, and Montefiore throughout. The first sentence on p. 127 should begin "Is it not . . ."

D. R. Jones.

Durham.

On the Notion of a Philosophy of History. By D. M. Mackinnon. Geoffrey Cumberlege. 2s.

The End of Time. By Josef Pieper. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

Metaphysics has been described as a "sort of poetry". The strict positivist imagined the implication of this analogy to be that any

metaphysics is as good as any other, provided only it is emotionally satisfying, and that therefore as a form of philosophy it can safely be dismissed. The defender of metaphysics does not need to deny the validity of the analogy. Granted a sufficiently objective view of the nature of poetry, the analogy can rather be understood to imply the depth and importance of this kind of philosophy. We may indeed be grateful to the positivist critique for making us consider more carefully what we are doing in particular kinds of philosophical inquiry. It is on this task that Prof. Mackinnon is engaged in his Hobhouse Memorial Lecture; his concern is the question of what is involved in that particular kind of inquiry, which goes by the name of philosophy of history. He argues that it is a family name for a useful type of inquiry, whose main common characteristic is a concern about the problem of evil in past and present experience. This kind of inquiry expresses itself in many different forms, and it is, in fact, in the work of a poet that Prof. Mackinnon finds the most illuminating example of it—namely, the third section of T. S. Eliot's *Little Gidding*. The lecture is best seen as an attempt to give philosophical respectability to this particular branch of study. It may be allowed that it helps towards that end, but if, as has been suggested, philosophy of history is to hold as central a place in the second half of this century as philosophy of science has held in the first, very much more remains to be done. This lecture does not take us very far along the road, and I could not help feeling that when the author himself refers to it as "this untidy and inconclusive exploration", he is not being unnecessarily self-depreciatory.

Prof. Mackinnon's insistence on the variety of methods that are appropriate to this kind of study should prepare us for the sub-title to Dr Pieper's book—"A Meditation on the Philosophy of History". For him the essential subject-matter of the philosophy of history is not the past but the future, the question of the end of history. Both an unmitigated optimism and an unmitigated pessimism as regards the end are the result of an over-simplification of the complex Christian picture. This must be understood as depicting a catastrophic end within history, in which the role of the Church is the "blood testimony", and an achievement of the goal outside time and beyond history. The relation between the two is not easy to grasp; the suggestion is thrown out, but not developed, that it might be understood in the light of the apparent futility and real success of the Cross. But here both seeming failure and real achievement are within history. It is interesting to compare Dr Robinson's essay on "The Christian Hope" (in *Christian Faith and Communist Faith*, pp. 216–18), where he insists that the goal is achieved within history. But when both have made the necessary qualifications—Dr Robinson that the hope is "from heaven" and Dr Pieper that the hope is for "a New Earth"—it is not easy to determine the real difference between them. We need to give some more thought to what we mean when we assert that the fulfilment of the Christian hope is "within" or "outside" history.

The book claims to be a meditation, and as such has many sugges-

tive ideas that provoke further thought. My main criticism would be to question the sources on which its thought is based. Dr Pieper insists that one can know nothing of the end, and therefore cannot philosophize in this way at all, unless one has first accepted some revelation concerning the end. But what constitutes this "traditional fund of truth believed to have been revealed"? In Dr Pieper's case it appears to be almost anything and everything (within reason) that has been said or believed about the Antichrist. No doubt the idea of the Antichrist needs to be taken seriously, and we must not be put off by the obscurity of the subject or the excesses of millenniarists—but even so may it not be misleading to treat it as the dominant element of tradition, in the light of which this whole subject is to be understood?

Ridley Hall,
Cambridge.

Maurice Wiles.

Plotinus. A Volume of Selections in a new English Translation. By A. H. Armstrong. Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

Dean Inge was right, no doubt, to deprecate a supposedly common tendency to regard neo-Platonism as the euthanasia of classical philosophy, "as if the clear-headed Greeks at last committed intellectual suicide by swooning away in a cloud of fragrant gas". Inge rightly admired Plotinus's synthesis of Greek philosophic traditions, with Hebraic theism and other elements, into "a mystical and ascetic religious cult which was ascetic without abandoning humanism", and he doubtless went a bit too far in saying that the Christian Church, as system and institution, was really the last creation of classical antiquity which may be said to have died in giving birth to it—Plotinus and his school functioning as a sort of intellectual *accoucheurs*. Yet it is arguable that neo-Platonism saved, in a sense, the intellectual heritage of modern man; and not only by producing a distillation of classical thought and aspiration that held the interest and commanded the protection of Christian thinkers throughout the Dark and Middle Ages. The neo-Platonic current of thought transmitted seeds of another kind also, those practical traditions of alchemy, astrology, and applied magic which preserved belief in the observation of nature and led ultimately to the development of inductive scientific method.

Neo-Platonism is, therefore, a fascinating thing to speculate and write about—perhaps too much so. And since it is also of obvious significance—to gain a sound synoptic view of theological history some understanding of Plotinus is obligatory—there is need for good, condensed, and sober handbooks on the great neo-Platonists' life and teaching, such as Prof. Armstrong has compiled. His own introductory essay is clear, succinct, and readable; he also gives some paragraphs from Porphyry's biography of his master, and then leaves Plotinus to present his own thought in the series of selections from the Enneads which constitutes the bulk of the book. The passages selected show Plotinus in his three main aspects: as the Roman

university professor expounding a more or less traditional Platonic philosophy, as the expositor of his own original and comprehensive synthesis, and, above all, as the eloquent hierophant of the ultimate union of the soul with its Divine essence.

The general reader, without a sufficient knowledge of the state of philosophic thinking in the third century, can hardly grasp the power of Plotinus's system or appreciate its fusion of the highest intellectual motives of its time; selections can at best only suggest the architectonic splendour and persuasive power that this phenomenon must have had in Rome, at a time when philosophy was in a poor way, pushed aside by the profitable study of rhetoric. Perhaps wisely, therefore, Prof. Armstrong seems to have chosen chiefly the passages which most vividly present Plotinus as exemplar and teacher of the way to direct vision of the Light. That is, moreover, the essential aspect of his work, and one that can at least be glimpsed by an intuitive and attentive reading of selections: it is, moreover, that which makes Plotinus's thinking relevant to any age, and perhaps especially to ours, which seems to be at a turning-point partly comparable to that of the Empire in the third century.

All the little we know of Plotinus the man confirms the impression of him as a highly realized human being: capable of states of entranced contemplation and yet supernormally competent in dealing with daily life. He was essentially the direct personal teacher, one who never wrote his philosophy until he was nearing the end of life, and who then wrote just as he could discourse upon the ultimate realities, steadily and rapidly, without hesitation or correction, *au courant de la plume*. He was far more than a philosopher, assumed the guardianship of the orphans of several deceased friends, and was the executor of their properties, as well as a practical arbitrator in many personal disputes. The Platonic and neo-Platonic schools aimed at the production of such exemplary lives, by disciplines of which we have only the abstract and intellectual records, the psychological being not so transmissible, though probably of even greater importance.

Little as is known of his teacher, Ammonius Saccas, there is surely significance in the fact that, upon leaving him, Plotinus set out to study the wisdom of Persia and India, though he was frustrated in this purpose and then went straight to Rome. For behind the masterly philosophic expression and the stoical *savoir vivre* there must have been long training in a high mental as well as moral *ascesis*, presumably a way of "the rejection of images" of which the developed traditions, then as now, were to be found further east. . . . "This is the soul's true end, to touch that Light and see It by Itself, not by another Light but by Itself, Which gives it sight as well. It must see that Light by which it is enlightened; for we do not see the sun by another light than his own. How then can this happen? Take away everything!"

Prof. Armstrong's few observations on the inexhaustible topic of relations between Plotinus's thought and Christian theology seem to be useful and sound: he shows, too, how the school of Plotinus,

although it created a genuinely religious if highly intellectual cult, was not inimical to the progress of Christianity; that, on the contrary, it waged effective war upon those schools of Gnosticism which were the most dangerous because most dualistic in tendency. From this point of view, this introductory essay, coupled with Harnack's excellent article in the *Enc. Brit.*, is enough to show at least why Plotinus is important. Really to understand what he taught is, of course, another matter. But the student who reads this selection will know by his reaction whether he has a call to go further, to read the Enneads and some of the abundant and excellent modern literature about them.

LONDON. PHILIP MAIRET.

THE PARISH IN ACTION. By Joost de Blank, Bishop of Stepney. Mowbrays. 7s. 6d.

This book is a tonic for the manic-depressive mentality which has invaded large areas of Church of England life. While there is nothing novel or sensational about anything which is proposed or described, there is an engaging frankness and humility about it which comes like a gust of fresh air. Here is a book quite free from those inhibiting traditions of ghastly good taste which have become a substitute for true thinking among us. Like the hero of Kipling's story, our training has led many of us to compromise with our prophetic vocation like the Brushwood Boy, whose public school had taught him to "keep his pores open and his mouth shut". Taken with Bryan Green's *Practice of Evangelism,* this book would do much to set the dispirited clergy on the way again.

But be it noted immediately that the experiment which the Bishop of Stepney outlines was successful in one parish. It is by no means his intention to encourage everyone to transfer his methods everywhere else. What we can all absorb is its spirit—the quality of zest for the pastoral and evangelical vocation which it displays. "The whole parish . . . needed to be turned inside out." This is but one of the notable phrases which are to be found in this book. It is, in fact, a message for the "successful" and traditional parish, whether in town or country, rather than for those whose pastoral concerns are set in areas where, unless the life of the church is constantly "turned inside out", there will be no church at all.

A most important point he makes is the determined way in which lay-people were engaged in a full and responsible manner in this work of the church. What presumption it is even to have to write such a phrase! Yet so confused, alas! have we become that we regard it as something novel to feel constrained to give lay-people worthwhile tasks in evangelism. By and large it would seem that the lay understanding of what is happening in church and in world is more profound than that of the general run of the clergy; and if there is a problem of communication between the church and the world, as we are so often told, there is an even greater domestic problem of com-

munication between theologically trained clergy and intellectually alert laity. Indeed, our wider problem may stem from the fact that we have not solved the domestic one. For we learn theological truth in an abstract and formal manner. The laity grasp its validity and relevance from concrete occasions. A great effort of mutual understanding is necessary to bring the two together. The best results flow from engagement upon a common task.

It is evident that the experiment which this book describes owed its inception to the necessity for common work in preparing for the Mission to London. Indeed, it seems that this is almost always the result of a "mission" in the traditional sense nowadays. But even if this is in fact so, we have no need to be depressed. If it takes twenty or even fifty years to turn "church-goers" into active and militant workers for Christ, then the "mission", even if it aimed at something different, will have achieved the more valuable objective. Listening the other day to some reports of local parochial missions and also to a symposium of the parochial effects of the much-publicized venture at Harringay, the writer was constrained to note that more new Christians had been brought into the life of the church in one year in the only parish of which he can speak with any intimate knowledge by what we foolishly call "the ordinary machinery of the parish" than by all these special efforts put together, reduced, of course, to the scale of a single parish. That we use the phrase "the ordinary machinery of the parish" only goes to show how far we have fallen from the spirit and outlook of the Acts of the Apostles. For what we presume to call "ordinary" is by no means ordinary, and some strange spiritual blindness must come over those who can call it common or unclean. The "ordinary work" of the parish is the work of the Holy Ghost. And when you really see that as the truth about any parish, wherever it may be, whatever condition it may be in when you first see it, it makes a world of difference to the people and to the parson. This book of the Bishop of Stepney will help many to see just that.

NORTHOLT. GORDON PHILLIPS.

PURITANISM AND RICHARD BAXTER. By Hugh Martin. S.C.M. Press. 15s.

PURITAN MANIFESTOES. Edited by W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas. S.P.C.K. 21s.

Lord Macaulay's epigrammatic inaccuracies combined with folk-memories of the Restoration stage have helped to pass on to us an anti-Puritan tradition which, in some of its aspects, requires interrogation at the bar of historical fact. In pursuance of this aim, Dr Martin's attractively written *Puritanism and Richard Baxter* gives evidence of individual Puritans who loved music, were amateurs of the arts, and whose condemnation of various abuses in Merrie England would receive general support to-day. Nor is the author unaware of the tendency in the Puritan sternness to degenerate into

a pharisaic legalism. While every tribute should be paid to the solid piety of the Puritans, it must be stressed that this tendency gave substance to valid criticism of the movement. In the same way, the multiplication of sects and the excesses of enthusiasm, both of which phenomena the Presbyterians deprecated, stemmed from that individualistic use of the Bible as authoritative for everything as well as doctrine, which underlies nearly all the theological groupings of Puritanism. This, in turn, was but an aspect of the problem which was at the root of the Anglican-Puritan tension, namely, "What is the ultimate source of authority in religion?" It was to this basic question that Hooker addressed himself. The Puritan position is well set out in the Admonition to the Parliament in 1572. It reveals that, in respect of its theological presuppositions, Puritanism desired to approximate the Church of England in doctrine, order and discipline to the standards of the Continental reformers. Under the Parliament this is, in effect, what it attempted to do. Even in 1662 it could be maintained, as it has been by a modern Congregationalist, that inclusion of the more moderate nonconformists on the terms which they proposed would have meant the sacrifice of the distinctively Anglican ethos. Dr Martin aims at giving a fair and factual picture of a partisan period when every intolerance and oppression can be all too easily matched on either side, and when toleration was sought by each party for itself, even the Independents refusing to grant it to "Popery and Prelacy". The growth of modern toleration was incidental to the religious struggles and sufferings of the seventeenth century, and belonged to the program of no party. Perhaps in the writings of the Cambridge Platonists alone was it regarded as a human right. In the closing years of the seventeenth century the rise of natural science and of a new concept of reason produced an intellectual climate in which neither dogmatism nor irrationalism was sure of a place. Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* gives us indirectly an insight into a changing society.

It will be strange if this book does not send many readers to discover or rediscover Richard Baxter's many-sided genius for themselves. He touched the life of his times at many points and on various levels. As theologian and as practical pastor, as a man of integrity, Baxter was one of the great figures in an age not miserly of greatness. The fact that he was not of a placable nature, but combative in argument, ran counter to his avowedly eirenic intentions. Baxter's account, for instance, of the conduct of the Savoy Conference needs supplementing with contemporary views of Baxter's conduct at the Conference, such as those of Ferne or Morley, which show him as dominating the Puritan party completely, sometimes to their evident dissatisfaction. From his own account he appears to have compiled all the answers and made most decisions by himself. Morley even declares that when Baxter's colleagues showed signs of "a fair compliance", he frustrated it. But despite that hastiness to which he himself admitted, Baxter's greatness and inner humility remain. In this book which is to be commended to all who desire

to know more of what he calls "our quarrelsome and creative past", Dr Martin has done justice to the writer and the man.

For a similar reason the reprint of *Puritan Manifestoes*, first edited in 1907 by the late Bishop W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas, will be welcomed. In a short preface Prof. Norman Sykes stresses the importance, in connexion with recent contributions to the ecclesiastical history of the reign of Elizabeth I, of those documents which its reappearance makes available.

CORK. H. R. McADOO.

SHORTER NOTICES

RETREAT ADDRESSES OF EDWARD KEBLE TALBOT. Edited by Lucy Menzies. S.P.C.K. 15s.

GOD'S WAY WITH MAN. By Dom Gregory Dix, O.S.B. Dacre Press. 5s. (cloth), 3s. 6d. (paper).

THE OPENING OF THE EYES. By Olaf Stapledon. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

The first of these books consists of a discerning biographical introduction, a retreat for lay-people, another for a religious community and eight addresses.

The outstanding mark of these papers is what struck his original hearers again and again, "a wonderful impression of his utter certainty of God" (p. 10). Yet in his desire for God and his interest in the workings of grace he, like his master and friend Baron von Hügel, never forgot the indispensable place which nature has in the process of our sanctification: so he was fond of quoting Oliver Quick's dictum, "God is not half so religious as the curate" (p. 170). This light touch and a delightful sense of humour runs through the book: and we are the more ready to lay to heart the exacting demands he puts before us, because so often he speaks with a quip that is never unkindly barbed: there is, for example, the churchwarden who always does himself well at table and remarks, "I quite agree with the Vicar that we must fast in spirit"! (p. 91).

The key to the spiritual life Fr Talbot finds in saying to God *un oui vivant* in every intimation of his will for daily life: this appears to be a principle similar to Père de Caussade's "sacrament of the present moment". It is in order to discern these divine intimations that Fr Talbot lays such stress on our fidelity to the practice of meditation—"to prevent us living our lives in a way that was appropriate a week ago, three weeks ago, five years ago, but which now our Lord is saying to us is to be lived from within in a new way" (p. 92). This will do something to prevent that "spirit of un-expectancy" (p. 129) settling down as it so often and so fatally does on the "over-forties".

God's Way with Man consists of addresses given at the Three Hours by Dom Gregory Dix on his last visit to America. They are realistic, dogmatic and catholic. The Bishop of Durham says in the foreword, "Uncompromising in its assertion of an unpopular doc-

trine—the wrath of God against sin, and Calvary as God's own way of saving us from that wrath—it gives us in the very midst of that doctrine a new glimpse of the simplicity of God's love" (p. 12).

But Christians who are concerned at the secularization of modern society should read books not only by men of great faith, but also those by men who are with difficulty finding their way towards faith. A notable example of such an odyssey is Olaf Stapledon's *The Opening of the Eyes*. Dr E. V. Rieu, a close friend of the author, says of him in the preface that his life was devoted to the search for a sure path through the problems of good and evil to the throne of God, and that in this search he was never content "to follow a beaten track if he suspected that it was a by-pass round an ugly truth" (p. viii). He starts almost overwhelmed with a sense of the insignificance of man in the immensities of space and time. We Christians need to see that this journey is seldom a steady upward climb, but is more like the crossing of a series of hills and valleys; and so deep are some of the valleys that the searcher sometimes seems farther away than ever from the goal. On this particular journey he meets the Church, safe, ancient and tired; the Marxists, so impressively confident; hungry Asia and martyred Africa, waking and indignant. No one can accompany the searcher and feel no need to re-examine the grounds of his own convictions, however firmly rooted.

Olaf Stapledon had nearly finished the manuscript at the time of his sudden death in 1950: we owe a debt of gratitude to his wife for editing this revealing and challenging document.

S. M. Gibbard, S.S.J.E.

Oxford.

Éléments de Morale Sociale. By Paul Steven. Desclée et Cie, Paris. N.p.

This is a manual of instruction in Christian social ethics for the use of students in Roman Catholic seminaries. In the course of over 600 pages it expounds with great lucidity the teaching of the Church, especially of the popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII, over the whole field of sociology.

Note. In the review of Dr B. Sundkler's *Church of South India* (Theology, July 1954, p. 270), the impression was inadvertently given that the Methodist Church in S. India became part of the South India United Church, whereas in fact it continued as a separate body until it joined the Church of S. India in 1947.

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